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[Despatch Abstract.]

POST-war Development- Forest Policy-
Papers Recorded.

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FOREST DEPARTMENT.

From

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Chief Conservator of Forests,
Egmore, Madras.

To

The Secretary to Government,
Development Department,
MADRAS.

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Refce. No.5961/45-D1 dated the 27th June 1945.

Sir,

SUB: FORESTS- Principles Governing future managements.
Ref: Government Memorandum No.56461-C/45-5, Development dated the 7th February 1945.

There has been no recent and no fully comprehensive enunciation of its Forest Policy by the Government of Madras. Government Order No. 844, Revenue dated the 29th October 1890 dealt with a certain of its aspects. In their Circular No. 22-F dated the 19th October 1894 communicated in G.O. No. 888 Revenue dated the 19th December 1894 the Government of India have formulated an almost complete statement of policy which reduces to writing the priciples which had governed Forest Policy even before that date and which continue to be its guiding priciples. The Madras Government have, in G.O. 888 Revenue, dated the 19th December 1894, strongly endorsed the underlying principles eunciated by the Government of India but have differed from that Government in certain matters concerned with carrying the policy into effect. The points of difference are the legal status of the "minor" forests and the agency for their management. The latter point was further considered by the Horne Committee in 1913 (G.O. No.3020 Revenue, dated the 13th October 1913), and the matter is now again under the consideration of Government. These points are mentioned in passing, but will not be referred to further as they concern methods of administration and not the underlying priciples of Forest Policy.

Recently, in his Note entitled "Post-War Forest Policy for India" Sir Herbert Howard, until recently Inspector General of Forests, drew attention to certain ommissions in the Government of India 1894 statement of Policy. (paragarphs 115-117 of his note).

Government have now desired me to draft for their consideration a statement of their Forest Policy. The following is an attempt to do so, based mainly on the Government of India statement of 1894, which in places is used verbatim:---

Forest Policy of the Government of Madras.

(1) The sole object with which the Government Forests are adminstered is the public benefit:-

In some cases the public to be benefited are the whole body of tax-payers; in others the people of the tract within which the forest is situated; but in almost all cases the constitutuion and preservation of a forest involve, in greater or less degree, the regulation of rights and the restriction of privileges of user in the forest area which may have previously been enjoyed by the inhabitants of its immediate neighbourhood. This regulation and restriction are justified only when the advantage to be gained by the public is great; and the cardinal priciple to be observed is that the rights and privileges of individuals must be limited, otherwise than for their own benefit, only in such degree as is absolutely necessary to secure that advantage.

(2) The Government Forests may be broadly classed under the following heads:-

(a) Forests the preservation of which is essential on climatic or physical grounds;
(b) Forests which afford a supply of valuable timbers for commercial purposes;
(c) Minor forests and Pasture lands.

It is not intended that any attempt should be made to class existing State forests under one or other of these heads. Some forests may occupy intermediate positions, and parts of one and the same forest may fall under different heads. The classification is useful only as affording a basis for the indication of the broad policy which should govern the treatment of each class respectively; and in applying the general policy, the fullest consideration must be given to local circumstances.

(3) The first class of forests lies generally in hilly country where the preservation of such vegetation as exists, or the encouragement of further growth is essential for the conservation and regulation of the water supply and the prevention of damage by erosion. Here the interests to be protected are important beyond all comparison with the interests which it may be necessary to restrict, and the lesser interests must not be allowed to stand in the way.

(4) The second class of forests include the tracts producing teak and other important timber and include also the more important fuel and bamboo forests. Such forests will be managed on commercial lines as sources of supplies to the consumer and of revenue to the State. But every rreasonable facility will be afforded to communities living on the margins of such tracts for the full and easy satisfaction of their needs at rates which are not competitive. Forest income is to be subordinated to this consideration.

(5) The third class of forests is made up of Minor firewood and scrub forest and of pasture lands. These will be managed mainly in the interests of the local population. Restrictions necessary for the preservation of the forests must be imposed and it must be remembered that these also, in many cases, are of high importance as protective cover on local catchment areas, but the satisfaction of reasonable local needs will take precedence of questions of revenue to the State.

(6) Subject to certain considerations the claims of agriculture are stronger than the claims of forest preservation:

The considerations referred to are:
(a) This does not apply to forest the preservation of which is essential on alimatic or physical grounds.

(b) The cultivation must be permanently although Government still countenance the system of shifting cultivation in certain forest lands at its disposal they do so only as an expedient and aim at its discontinuance at the earliest practicable date.

(c) Cultivation must not be allowed so to extend as to encroach upon the minumum area of forest which is needed to supply the general forest needs of the country(the Government have accepted the principle that the forest area should be built up to 20% to 25% of the country's total area), or the reasonable forest requirements, present and prospective, of the neighbourhood in which it is situated.

(d) A forest must not be honey-combed with patches of cultivation.

(e) Cultivation must be genuine and effective cultivation and not an excuse for creating pastoral villages.

(7) Extent and distribution of Forest:

As one of the steps leading towards the goal of a forest area of 20% to 25% of the country's total areas it is the policy of Government to creat as far as possible village forests distributed to meet the local needs of the people where these are not met already, one of the main objects being to reduce the use of cow-dung as fuel, thus permitting its proper use on the land as manure.

(8) The Management of Private Forest:

A considerable part of the forest land in the province is in private ownership. Much of its is mismanaged and cannot under present conditions be regarded as a permanent forest asset of the country. It is the policy of Government to enact such legislation and to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure an effective and conservative management of forest land in private ownership.

(9) The principle of management on the basis of sustained yield will be followed in all Government forests:

This principle may seem almost too obvious to need mention. But it has not always been observed, especially in connection with pasture management. It is only within the last four years that the principle of limiting the use of grazing to the incidence a pasture can stand without deterioration has been accepted by the Government in G.O. No.1642 dated the 13th August 1942.

The same principle will be extended to the management of private forests.

(10) Acquisition of forest land in important catchment areas or for production of produce of national importance:

There are many instances in which forest land essential for the conservation of water sources and the prevention of erosion etc. (land which would fall under paragraph 2 (a) above if it belonged to the state) is in private ownership. There are also cases in which the amount of suitable forest land in possession of the state is insufficient for the production of the necessary quantities of certain supplies of national importance- e.g. teak and softwoods. It is the Government's policy to examine such cases with a view to acquisition if this is found necessary.

Summary: The statement of policy enunciated above may be summarised thus:

(1) The sole object with which the Government Forests are administered is the public benefit.

(2) Areas necessary for the preservation of the general climatic and physical conditions of the country must be kept as forest.

(3) The minimum amount of forest necessary for the well being of the country must be preserved or created or if necessary acquired .

(4) Subject to (2) and (3) above.

(i) Cultivation is more important than forests.

(ii) The satisfaction of the wants of the local population free or at rates which are not competitive is more important than revenue.

(iii) after the above have been satisfied the object of management is the realization of the greatest possible revenue (or of material of National importance) consistent with the principle of forest management- i.e. on the principle of sustained annual yield.

Sd.
for Chief Conservator of
Forests.

True copy.

DEVELOPMENT (CI) DEPARTMENT.

To A.S.

In September 1944, the Inspector General of Forests enquired, among other things whether this Government proposed to write its own forest policy which would presumably be generally based on the existing Forest policy of the Government of India issued in 1894. The I.G's letter was referred to the C.C.F He suggests that if the Government desires he will submit a statement of the future Government policy for the consideration of the Government. It was then considered that a statement of forest policy would be of more than academic interest and of considerable value for the purposes of future management. The C.F.F. was accordingly asked to submit for the consideration of the Government a statement of Forest Policy. The statement prepared by the C.C.F. is on pp 29-32 cf. It was examined and submitted for orders. Sri S.V. Ramamurthi (the then third Adviser to H.E.) ordered that as the Government had not then reached any final decisions on the question of the future management of the Panchayat forests, The Government have since ordered the trasfer of Panchayat forests in six districts to the control of the Forest Department and proposals for transfering the control of Panchayat forests in a few more districts to the Forest Department have been called for from the C.C.F. & This may be over till a decision was reached in the file regarding the future management of Panchayat forest.

The question now for consideration is whether a fresh statement of policy in the matter relating to Forest adminstration will be considered necessary. In the file realting to Mr. Sathe's report the Government have decided that no fresh statement of policy is necessary. (In the file file relating to Mr. Thirumurthy's report on private forests Secretary has noted that a fresh statement of forest policy is not necessary. In the circumstances it is for orders whether the I.G. of Forests may be informed that this Government do not propose to write a statement of forest policy now.

The I-G's letter is dated September 1944 it is also for consideration whether a reply ~~needs is~~ snt now. may be

I do not think a statement of policy is called for as we decided at Ooty, afforestation and ~~deputation~~ deforestation in Government forests should definitely be controlled, and in private forests they should be increasingly controlled. The tendency to emphasise that should be replaced by orderly development of hard and soft woods to meet long term plans. Above all forest revenues should be increased. These are our main planks and the rest of the claptrap does not interest me.

To A.S.

A draft letter to the I.G. of Forests is submitted for approval.

May be circulated to Hon'ble Minister (~~Dev.~~ Agri.) for approval.

Secretary: Should we reply now for a reference of 1944 !! What is the purpose. Speak.

Spoken: This may be closed now. But the C.C.F. and his P.A.S. may be asked to meet us some day after the Secretary returns from Ooty to discuss some of the forest problems.

To A.S.

(Orders in circulation on p 24 ante)

The papers may now be recorded as G.O. Ms. No.3033 dated 5-6-1948 for future reference.

With reference to 'A' on p 24 ante, a draft D.O. to the C.C.F will be submitted after secretary returns from Ooty.

True Copy

Office Assistant

Superintendent,
Madras Record Office.

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